

THE NEW REPUBLIC

WINTER BOOK REVIEW

William Lee Miller

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and Others

Gus Tyler **Save the Electoral College**

V. Matveyev **From a Soviet Critic**

Edwin Dale, Jr. **The Gold Exodus**

November 28, 1960, 25 cents

T.R.B.

from
Washington

When Will the Lines Cross?

★ Top drawer authorities on the Soviet economy held a one-day, off-the-record seminar here last week. They spoke as individuals but pretty much represented the thinking of such groups as the CIA, Committee for Economic Development, Rand Corporation and State Department, as well as half a dozen outfits that have just sent exchange observers to Moscow. A feature was the straight talk and absence of protective circumlocution which seems essential to any public discussion of Russian achievements. The consensus seemed to be:

Soviets want peace; they do so because they think economic, not military, growth is the key to domination (and because nobody can win a nuclear war). They firmly believe that whoever wins the A-H race (in bombs), they will win the GNP race (gross national product). If any US expert denied the Soviet's impressive record he didn't tell the group.

The Soviets, it was said, will meet their 7-year plan production goal. The Soviets claim a current 11 percent economic growth rate and a production already 60 percent of ours; we say their production is only 40 percent of ours, and their growth rate is 8.5-9 percent — the latter an extraordinarily high figure. Under Eisenhower (1953-1959) our growth rate has been only 2.4 percent. (Nobody was speaking politics so it wasn't stressed that other European countries are now growing faster than we, and that our slow-down is due to a deliberate Eisenhower policy of sacrificing growth and full employment to price stability.)

The Soviets boast they will equal our production in "1967-68." Our men say this is preposterous, but that even if President Kennedy jacks up US growth

to 4 percent the two lines should cross in the 80's; "certainly," one said, by 2000 AD. (It should be remembered the USSR has 18 percent more population and an 18 percent larger labor force than the US).

There's no secret to Soviet economic growth. They are grimly ploughing back 30 percent of annual product into tools, plants and machinery and will soon raise this to 35 percent. The US is reinvesting only 17-20 percent. By 1970 the Soviets will have, at this rate, a "mature economy" — the critical point, according to the theories of MIT professor Rostow, at which an emerging world power

normally decides whether to use its strength for international aggrandizement or home improvement.

One final point. The Soviet isn't monolithic. It's only seven years since Stalin's death released the managerial community from stultifying bondage. Ob-

servers found the place full of fascinating, unresolved contradictions and irrationalities. The menace of internal revolt is over in Russia but another internal "menace" may develop — for better living. It is of supreme importance to us, they said, to foster every possible contact with Russia, not merely to destroy the bogey of "imperialistic aggression" but more subtly to show the citizens of a garrison state the way to consumer satisfactions.

One postscript to the above. This reporter recently saw "Behind the Great Wall," a startling documentary filmed in China and narrated by Chet Huntley. We came away thinking that if America and Russia haven't destroyed each other in the next few years they are almost certainly going to be allied against a far bigger power — China, the awakened giant. We shan't be around in AD 2000 but it promises to be uncommonly interesting. Incidentally, some reports say China will have a nuclear bomb of its own in 1961 — a year earlier than previously expected.

Shake-up

★ The thing to remember about reapportionment is this: It is the state legislatures who draw boundary lines and most state legislatures are geographically biased in favor of farm districts. Millions are moving from farms to cities; seven out of 10 Americans now live in urban areas. But city people are

heavily under-represented in state legislatures. The vast majority of legislatures haven't been reapportioned. They won't be either. Why? — because it would be asking rural representatives to commit suicide. In a few states, city dwellers can force reapportionment; in most they can only appeal to the courts. But a sharply split Supreme Court has heretofore refused to intervene. This really is a fascinating subject: it is a wrong with no remedy at law.

What is the effect? State after state has one legislative chamber, generally the upper house, impervious to liberal capture: Michigan under Gov. Williams and New Jersey under Gov. Meyner are examples. The underpopulated rural areas are conservative, and, as Gus Tyler's article in this *New Republic* shows, they exercise a veto in the state legislatures against the all-but-bankrupt cities.

And secondly, it is the state legislatures who also draw the boundaries for the Congressmen who go to Washington. These boundaries are now so warped and gerrymandered that it is estimated sparsely-populated rural, conservative areas have about 24 more seats in the House than they are entitled to by population.

Why is this acute now? Because the new 1960 census requires nine states to re-draw boundaries to add House seats and 16 to do the same thing to lose seats. It is the biggest shake-up in generations. More than half the readers of this column probably live in states where revision is required and almost certainly a majority of them will see the thing politically manipulated to perpetuate old rotten boroughs and unjust gerrymanders.

Hope for the Best

★ By the closest election in history (Kennedy's melting majority is currently down to about 178,000 in 68 million) the tough young President-elect has been given a "mandate" that means anything he can make it mean. It is disappointing in a lot of ways, but we hope for the best. We guess that the test will come at the start. Kennedy has been around; he knows that a new President's power is concentrated in the first few months and we expect the supreme effort to come then. It looks like we may have a lively winter.